

INJURY PREVENTION: TRAMPOLINE PARK SAFETY – EXPERT OVERVIEW

In 2018, there were more than 800 trampoline parks operating in the United States, a dramatic increase from just a handful a decade earlier. While the industry has experienced rapid growth, the incidence of injuries has expanded at an even greater rate. This trend has presented ongoing challenges for oversight agencies, particularly given that fewer than a dozen states have enacted regulations specific to trampoline park operations. This article examines the increasing frequency of trampoline park injuries and outlines the applicable standard of care for operators and attendants, which—when properly implemented—can significantly reduce the risk of patron injury.



Overview of Trampoline Park Environments

Indoor trampoline parks are commonly configured as gymnasium-style facilities featuring wall-to-wall trampoline courts bordered by angled trampoline walls, rigid structures, or padded surfaces. The junctions between trampoline beds are typically covered with protective padding; however, these areas can still present injury risks when patrons land improperly.

Many facilities incorporate additional attractions such as foam pits, ninja-style obstacle courses, trapeze systems, climbing features, and suspended elements. Each of these attractions introduces unique risk profiles and requires adherence to its own applicable safety considerations. Foam pits, in particular, require careful attention to depth, foam

quality, and maintenance practices, as deficiencies in these areas can significantly increase the likelihood of injury.

Trampoline Park Injuries

Injuries sustained at trampoline parks range from minor sprains and contusions to more serious outcomes such as fractures, dislocations, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, and, in rare cases, death. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, trampoline park-related emergency room visits increased from 581 in 2010 to 6,932 in 2014. During that period, the average injured participant was approximately 13 years old and predominantly male.

Additional data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), collected through the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), indicates that in 2019 alone, 116,372 individuals were treated in emergency rooms for trampoline-related injuries, with 3,354 requiring hospitalization. These figures illustrate both the frequency and severity of injuries associated with trampoline use in public amusement settings.

Mechanisms of Injury

Injuries at trampoline parks generally arise from two primary mechanisms: interactions between patrons and equipment, and interactions among patrons themselves.

Patron-to-Equipment Interactions

Injuries involving equipment often result from improper use, inadequate supervision, or deficiencies in maintenance. A common example includes patrons landing on frame padding covering springs or structural components. While padding is designed to provide impact attenuation, it does not eliminate the risk of injury, particularly when subjected to improper or high-force landings.

Operators are responsible for maintaining all equipment in accordance with applicable standards, including ASTM F2970, and manufacturer guidelines. This includes ensuring that netting, padding, support structures, and redundant systems are properly installed, maintained, and functioning as intended. Routine inspections are a critical component of this responsibility. Daily pre-opening inspections, along with periodic inspections beneath trampoline beds and within structural components, should be documented through a formalized checklist system. Consistent recordkeeping supports both safety compliance and operational accountability.

Patron-to-Patron Interactions

Injuries resulting from interactions between patrons are frequently associated with overcrowding, mismatched participant sizes or abilities, or erratic jumping behavior. Collisions may occur when one patron lands on another or when individuals move unpredictably within shared use areas.

Effective supervision plays a central role in mitigating these risks. Attendants must actively monitor patron behavior, regulate the number of participants within each activity zone, and intervene when unsafe conditions arise. Age segregation, particularly in designated child-only areas, is an important control measure, as the presence of larger or more forceful participants can create hazardous conditions for younger users.

TAAG-Based Operational Controls and Active Supervision

Industry guidance reflected in Trampoline Adventure and Amusement Group (TAAG) operational materials emphasizes that injury prevention is not solely dependent on equipment condition, but also on structured, active supervision and consistent enforcement of rules. Under this approach, attendants are not passive observers but are expected to actively manage patron behavior, anticipate hazardous conditions, and intervene before unsafe actions escalate.

TAAG-aligned practices emphasize maintaining appropriate patron density within activity zones, ensuring clear separation of participants by size and ability where applicable, and strictly enforcing one-user-per-trampoline expectations unless a specific activity is designed otherwise. Attendants are trained to recognize developing risks such as double bouncing, erratic jumping patterns, or unauthorized use of equipment features (e.g., climbing on structural elements or accessing restricted areas). Prompt verbal correction and, when necessary, removal of non-compliant patrons are essential components of this control system.

Additionally, TAAG guidance underscores the importance of structured staffing models, including defined zones of responsibility, continuous line-of-sight supervision, and proactive floor movement by supervisory personnel. Communication between attendants—particularly during rotations—is critical to maintaining situational awareness and continuity of safety enforcement. These operational controls are intended to reduce both patron-to-patron and patron-to-equipment injury mechanisms by addressing unsafe behaviors in real time, rather than reacting after an incident occurs.

Supervision and Operational Responsibilities

The safe operation of a trampoline park depends heavily on the quality of its staffing, training, and supervision practices. Employees must be properly trained not only in operational procedures but also in hazard recognition and risk mitigation.

Supervisory personnel should maintain continuous oversight of all activity areas, actively moving throughout the facility to support attendants and address developing risks.

Attendants must be assigned to clearly defined zones, each containing a single activity type, to ensure focused and effective monitoring.

To maintain attentiveness, attendants should be rotated at regular intervals—commonly every 30 minutes—with structured transition periods. These brief pauses allow for communication between staff regarding patron behavior and potential hazards, while ensuring continuous coverage of all activity areas.

Attendants are expected to remain vigilant at all times, continuously scanning their assigned areas and maintaining clear lines of sight. They should not turn their backs on active zones or become distracted from their supervisory duties. High-risk areas such as foam pits and airbag landing zones require dedicated attendants due to the increased potential for injury.

Signage, Instruction, and Patron Awareness

Clear and visible signage is an essential component of trampoline park safety. Warning signs and usage instructions should be prominently displayed throughout the facility to inform patrons of the inherent risks and proper use of equipment.

Supplemental instructional materials, such as safety videos or brief orientations, can further enhance patron understanding and compliance. These measures also reinforce the authority of attendants and contribute to a culture of safety within the facility.

Conclusion

The rapid expansion of trampoline parks has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in injury incidents, underscoring the importance of consistent adherence to established safety practices. Effective injury prevention requires a comprehensive approach that includes proper equipment maintenance, routine inspections, structured supervision, and clear communication of rules and risks to patrons.

When operators implement and enforce these elements in accordance with industry standards, manufacturer guidelines, and TAAG-informed operational practices, the likelihood of injury can be significantly reduced. Conversely, deficiencies in supervision,

enforcement, or maintenance may contribute to hazardous conditions and increase the risk of preventable incidents. A proactive and disciplined approach to safety remains essential to protecting patrons and maintaining the integrity of trampoline park operations.

Investigating Trampoline Park Injuries

Lance Miller of Miller Safety Inspections & Consulting, Inc. is qualified to thoroughly examine whether the standard of care for trampoline park operation was met in a situation where an injury has occurred.